

COVID-19 Infection Control Guidance for In-Person Interpretation Services

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is providing this COVID-19 infection prevention guidance to keep healthcare interpreters safe and healthy while working. Interpreters who provide interpretation services over the phone are not at risk of work-related COVID-19 transmission from their clients. This guidance is for those providing in-person interpretation services in a healthcare or dental setting.

Protect yourself and others

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Otherwise, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. To use the hand sanitizer, cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until dry. Use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. If you do touch these areas, wash your hands before and after.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home away from others if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

For in-person interpretation

- Until relaxation of social distancing, use over the phone or video-based interpretation whenever possible instead of being in the same room with the patient.
- If presence of the interpreter is required inside of the exam room, the interpreter should:
 - Remain at least 6 feet away from the patient at all times, or further if possible.
 - Limit time in an enclosed space to less than 15 minutes, if possible.
 - With patients who are known or suspected to have COVID-19, wear a facemask, face shield, gown, and gloves (the same type of personal protective equipment (PPE) as the healthcare provider interacting with the patient).
 - The healthcare provider will provide the interpreter with appropriate PPE.
 - When with patients with a respiratory illness not due to COVID-19, at a minimum, wear a facemask.
 - When using PPE:
 - Place the mask carefully to cover your mouth and nose securely to minimize gaps between your face and the mask.
 - Avoid touching the mask after putting it on.
 - Do not reuse PPE. Dispose of masks and any other PPE immediately after use.

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- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after you touch or remove PPE.
- If you have been in close contact with a person sick with COVID-19 while you were not wearing PPE:
 - Self-quarantine at home, stay away from other people, and do not go to work for 14 days after last exposure to the ill person.
 - Ask your healthcare provider about being tested for COVID-19.
 - Stay away from others if you start having any symptoms (cough, fever or shortness of breath) and contact your healthcare provider.

More COVID-19 Information

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's orders, symptoms, how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more help.

The risk of COVID-19 is not due to race, ethnicity or nationality. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share the facts with others to keep rumors and myths from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**. For more help, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please call your health care provider.

Grateful acknowledgement that this content was adapted from Oregon Health Authority.

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